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The illustrations are not entirely successful. The cathedral doors on page 342 are too small to show what they were intended to show. One or two compartments from each, enlarged, would show it better. And many of the portraits are so poor that it would be far better to omit them.

PAUL VAN DYKE.

The Arab Conquest of Egypt and the last Thirty Years of the Roman Dominion. BY ALFRED J. BUTLER. (Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Henry Frowde. 1902. Pp. xxxvii, 563.)

THERE are few periods in Mohammedan history so obscure as the years during which the conquest of Egypt took place. This is the more surprising in view of the completeness in detail of what has been handed down to us concerning the life of the founder of the new faith and the early years of its upbuilding. Even where Mohammedan annalists disagree and contradict each other, a little acumen and some historical discernment enable us to unravel the skein. The one great exception is Egypt. Here the primal facts are disputed and the leading dates uncertain. This may be due to the fact that very few of the classical and Arabic authorities who wrote on Egypt or who mentioned events occurring there really knew much about the country itself; the earliest Arabic writers lived a hundred years after the conquest; and the most learned of them, such as al-Makrizi, al-Suyuti, and Ibn Dukmak (all of the fifteenth century) are more topographers than historians; and the sources from which they drew were already in their day much troubled. The lacuna might have been filled by the works of Coptic writers; but only a small part of this literature has come down to us. The publication by Zotenberg in 1879 of the chronicle of the Coptic Bishop John of Nikiu, a good and reliable account of one who was born just a little too late to be an eyewitness of the conquest itself, is the foundation-stone upon which every reconstruction of this history must be built. Unfortunately it has come down to us incomplete and muddled and only in an Ethiopic version. Mr. Butler laments "the slightness of his acquaintance with Arabic," a circumstance which might have worked havoc with one who has had to deal so much with Arabic authorities, did not translations abound as well as helpful translators. And withal, Mr. Butler has occasionally slipped. The great historical work of Tabari he knows only from Zotenberg's French translation of the Persian rendering; otherwise he would not say (p. 326) that the treaty of Amr with Alexandria is only known from the Tabari quotation in Ibn Khaldun. Even one who runs may read it in the Leyden edition, Part I., p. 2588. Nor would he say (p. 66) that according to Tabari the Persian king Chosroes "issued an edict allowing the Christians in his dominions to restore their churches and to make converts of the Magians if they could." The text reads, "to restore their churches and permitted any one to go over to their church who wanted to do so, *except the Magians*"; which is much more intelligible as, according to Zoroastrian teaching, apostacy was punished by death (Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, 287). The date

of Mohammed's letters to the various rulers is not 627 but 629, as is seen from the succinct account of Ibn S'ad, published and translated by Wellhausen in his *Skizzen*, IV. 97. That the future conqueror of Egypt, Amr ibn al-As, was sent by Mohammed with a letter to Oman, is mentioned not only by Ibn Ishak (Butler, p. 140, note 1) but also by Ibn S'ad; though not in the year 6 but in the year 10 (Wellhausen, IV. 102; VI. 25). On the whole, the latest German authorities who have written on Arabic history, such as August Müller, Nöldeke, and Wellhausen, are not cited by Butler. Certainly they do not, nor does Lane-Poole, deserve to be included in the sweeping condemnation of past historians in which Mr. Butler indulges. The work before us would not have turned out so voluminous, had not the author undertaken in many places to kill flies already dead.

But these are petty criticisms on the whole, and must not blind us from a full appreciation of the splendid piece of work which Mr. Butler has done; even though many of the arguments for his theses cannot be accepted without much reserve. He has gone into a most detailed examination of even the most minute points, and has certainly said all that can be said to-day upon the subject. His work is especially valuable as it presents a logical and connected history of all the events that led up to the conquest as well as of the conquest itself. It has usually been held that before the actual invasion of Egypt the country was laid under tribute to the Arabs by Cyrus for three or more years; that the refusal of the tribute by Manuel occasioned the invasion; that Mukaukas, who was a Copt, sided with the Arabs and rendered them every assistance; and that Alexandria after a long siege was captured by storm. It has been long known that the revolt of Manuel occurred several years later (645) and preceded the second capture of Alexandria. Butler's main point is to prove who this Mukaukas was and what rôle the Copts played during all this period. The personality of the man who played so large a part in the defense, or rather the betrayal, of Roman Egypt has always been the subject of the extremest doubt; even Wellhausen, in his latest works, is uncertain. Butler's identification of him with Cyrus, the Chalcedonian patriarch and viceroy of Heracleus, the oppressor of the Copts for ten long years, will probably command the assent of all serious students. That Egypt surrendered without a blow is a myth that has long since been dispelled; but the picture of the stubborn resistance which it offered is brought out effectually and learnedly by Butler. Whether the Copts remained entirely as indifferent to the coming of the Arabs as our author makes out is however open to some doubt. Mr. Butler seems to hold a brief for the Copts. And no doubt they have in the past been much maligned; but it is going too far to say that they remained entirely passive at both the Persian (616) and the Arab invasion. John of Nikiu, upon whose statements this idea rests, concedes that the Copts did aid the Mohammedans, though he says that this was only when the enemy had taken possession of the Fayum (p. 211). They had been forced within the pale of the established church (p. 252); and they

openly sided with the Arabs when Alexandria revolted (p. 471), even making a regular agreement with them until Alexandria was recaptured (p. 480). This does not look like entire passiveness; and we can well understand how they looked for some relief in the coming of the Arabs, preferring men of a strange faith to their own who had treated them so harshly. There is, however, no evidence that in the beginning they took up arms against the former overlords.

One of the most interesting of Butler's chapters (XXV.) deals with the library of Alexandria. No scholar to-day seriously believes that the Arabs would have been guilty of such a sacrilegious burning of books; but it is well to have the baselessness of the historical evidence for this sacrilege placed so clearly before us; its first circumstantial mention being in Abu al-Faraj, a Christian author of the late thirteenth century. Abu al-Faraj did not invent it; he invented nothing. Some such report must have been current, as it is found also in Abd al-Latif (1200), Abu al-Fida (1273-1331), and al-Makrizi (1365-1441); but for five centuries after its supposed occurrence no mention is made of it by either Christian or Mohammedan writers.

The special student of Mohammedan history will, however, hardly agree with Butler's relative estimates of the character of the Calif Omar and the conqueror of Egypt, Amr. The calif was anything but greedy (p. 459), as Butler, relying upon a sentence in al-Baladhuri, says. He was of a rugged and almost superhuman simplicity, as may be seen in the many traditions about him gathered by Tabari, or in the excellent sketch of his life quite recently published by Sachau ("Über den zweiten Chalifen Omar," in *J. B. der K. Preuss. Acad.*, 1902, xv.). His one and only thought was the state exchequer; and his somewhat harsh treatment of Amr was due to the fact that the latter was too strong a helpmate and too probably an opponent (Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich*, p. 30). The later history of the califate shows how well-founded was this fear of successful generals in distant countries.

RICHARD GOTTHEIL.

Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence, and Constitutional Theory. By DUNCAN B. MACDONALD, M.A., B.D. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1903. Pp. xii, 386.)

PROFESSOR MACDONALD calls attention in the modest preface of this little volume to the lack of any text-book upon the subject of Muslim law and to the difficulties in the way of a student attempting to supply the need. No one with the slightest acquaintance with Arab history and institutions will fail to sympathize in his description of the obstacles to an effort to render this complicated subject clear to "non-Arabists," but the author should be warmly commended both for his devotion to a task which no older scholar has been heretofore willing to undertake and for his success in its execution. The book is, as the title suggests, divided into three portions of unequal length. The fact that the first, on constitutional development, is named last on the title-page suggests the conclu-